



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOUR REASONS YOUR GROUP WILL LOVE THEIR FOOD AND DRINK ADVENTURES IN HAWAII

Many of Hawai'i's most award-winning and popularly lauded chefs and bartenders are ready to satisfy food requests and appetites that planners of meetings and incentive group travel are seeking to fill. From showcasing fresh and innovative cuisine reflective of Hawai'i's multitude of cultures to offering elevated dining experiences, the tastiest food your group will encounter in the Islands will connect them with ingredients procured from *mauka* (toward the mountain) to *makai* (toward the sea) prepared in the most inventive and delicious ways. Sending a group to Hawai'i? Here are four reasons why the group's food and drink adventures throughout the Islands will captivate everyone's palate.

- **Hawai'i is home to an excellent craft beer, local-made spirits and cocktail scene.** Several small boutique breweries and distilleries have launched in the Islands in recent years, producing craft beers and spirits often made, in part, with Hawai'i-grown ingredients. Spirits include vodkas and whiskeys (distilled, not flavored, from pineapple), traditional rums (made with Hawai'i-grown sugar), 'ōkolehao (a Hawai'i-born spirit distilled from the *ti* plant), and artisanal agricole rums made from heritage sugarcane varietals. While in the Islands, be sure your group not only tastes inventive cocktails crafted with local-distilled spirits but also tours Hawai'i distilleries open to the public including Ocean Vodka Organic Farm and Distillery, Kōloa Rum Company, Hali'imaile Distilling Company, Kō Hana Distillers and others. You'll also find beers infused with everything from local-grown *liliko'i* (passion fruit), lemongrass and pineapple to seasonal ingredients like blood orange, mango and lychee.
- **Our farm- and ocean-to-table never travels far to your plate.** With Hawai'i chefs so close in proximity to local farmers, ranchers and fishermen – the state's eight islands comprise just 10,931 square-miles – much of the Hawaiian Islands' locally grown, raised and caught ingredients arrive in restaurant kitchens at peak freshness and flavor, and are often served in their purest form. From fresh-caught amaebi (*sweet shrimp*) from Kaua'i and O'ahu oysters, to morning-picked, dinner-served island of Hawai'i lettuces and Maui fiddlehead fern, farm- and ocean-to-table here is truly just that. Encourage your attendees to always look for local-grown ingredients on their menus and seek out restaurants and chefs that craft their menus with as much local ingredients they can get their hands on – trust us, their ranks are ever-growing.
- **Your attendees haven't really tasted poke until they've tasted it in Hawai'i.** The gustatory joys of *poke* have spread worldwide, but Hawai'i is still the best place on Earth to enjoy poke. Why? Simply put, innovation forever respects purity. Perhaps because poke was born here, Hawai'i chefs, even as they test the culinary boundaries of the dish, rarely stray far from tenets of the basic recipe – featuring the freshest raw fish, sea salt, seaweed and chopped *'inamona* (kukui nut). Make sure attendees who've sampled poke elsewhere in the world, seek it out here. Traditional poke is easy to find in any popular Hawai'i poke shop, available in recipe and ingredient varieties that impress with their inventiveness. Some of our favorite places to buy poke include Makai Sushi on Kaua'i, Ono Seafood and Tanioka's Seafoods on O'ahu, and Poke Market and Suisan Fish Market on the island of Hawai'i.

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- **No two food festivals in Hawai'i are alike, and none are like you've experienced anywhere else.** The Hawai'i Food and Wine Festival has top Hawai'i and worldwide chefs spotlighting local ingredients, dishes and cooking traditions with brilliant dining events. The Kona Coffee Cultural Festival and Ka'u Coffee Festival are all about sharing the best of our homegrown java. The Maui County Ag Festival celebrates the farmers, food producers and chefs of the island with eat-on-the-spot and take-home local eats, while the East Maui Taro Festival honors not just *kalo*, but everything edible that's grown, raised or fished in the remote district's small communities. A Taste of the Hawaiian Range praises the island of Hawai'i's ranching and farming bounty with a carnivore's dream menu. And we haven't even tacked on a handful of culinary feasts dedicated to Hawai'i-made craft beers and chocolate here. Look for food festivals with dates that match up with your group's time in the Islands and let your attendees know about them. They'll be grateful you did.

As hosts to a variety of unique cultural attractions and one-of-a-kind experiences, the islands of Hawai'i offer countless amazing ways to craft a rewarding itinerary filled with cultural experiences without having to lose the conveniences of traveling within the United States. For additional information or ideas on how to plan your next visit, please visit www.meethawaii.com.

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About Meet Hawai'i

Meet Hawai'i is a collaboration of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), HTA's Global Marketing Team and the Hawai'i Convention Center (HCC) to reinforce the brand of the Hawaiian Islands as a world-class destination for global business meetings, conventions and incentive programs. The marketing efforts of the Meet Hawai'i team are overseen by HTA, the state of Hawai'i's tourism agency. HTA was established in 1998 to ensure a successful visitor industry well into the future. Its mission is to strategically manage Hawai'i tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with the state of Hawai'i's economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires and visitor industry needs.

Special note to media: HTA recognizes the use of the *'okina* ['] or glottal stop, one of the eight consonants of the (modern) Hawaiian language; and the *kahakō* [ā] or macron (e.g., in Hawai'i place names such as Lāna'i). However, HTA respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.

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